

## **Don't let the samba die: education for creative economy and cultural and financial sustainability of samba wheels in Rio de Janeiro**

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### **Abstract**

*The aim is to examine how the tasks and activities developed by students of the Professional Master's Program in Creative Economy Management (MPGEC) at ESPM-Rio contributed to the cultural and financial sustainability of the Carioca Network of Samba Wheels (RS). The main argument indicates that, as RS may have a fundamental position in the generation of cultural and economic value with a great capacity to articulate with authorities and a strong legitimacy in the carioca samba system, MPGEC students worked to minimize weaknesses related to institutional communication, the relationship with people who attend the samba wheels and contracting parties, people management and strategic planning, as well as seize opportunities related to cultural tourism and face threats such as the growing bureaucracy and the strong opposition to samba wheels from showhouses. To contribute to the RS's cultural and financial sustainability, MPGEC students focused on a strategy for professional management of artists' careers to generate more income and jobs for the professionals in the samba wheels and the promotion of the samba culture in Rio de Janeiro. The students also proposed a better institutional presentation, with more robust mission, vision and values for the RS's brand, and the implementation of a customer relationship management for the network to stimulate the loyalty of the people who attend the samba wheels with personalized products and the enhanced use of social networks to communicate with them. They also highlighted the need of a new organizational structure for RS to deal with more complex activities related to marketing, artistic management, events production and articulation with public authorities and local commercial establishments where the samba wheels take place.*

**Keywords:** education; creative economy; samba wheels; Rio de Janeiro; cultural sustainability; financial sustainability

## 1. Introduction

The samba wheels are a very common manifestation of samba's identity in Brazil, particularly in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Like jam sessions, samba wheels usually do not require large financial investments and bring together people who sing and dance, while musicians play instruments and sing. In the beginning of the twentieth century, they started to take place in Rio de Janeiro as meetings to celebrate the African roots of a great part of its population, especially at the home of the cook and holy mother Tia Ciata. The backyard of her house was a meeting place for culinary, sound and dance traditions. The samba wheels promoted the exchange of cultural experiences and knowledge and expanded to other backyards at Rio de Janeiro's poorest neighborhoods. They were the basis for the creation of the samba schools, which started their worldwide famous parades in the 1940s. In the 1960s and 1970s, samba composers returned to the backyard tradition of wheels. They met to show each other their cultural production, and many talented artists started to be known by the public because of their participation at the samba wheels, such as João Nogueira, Dona Ivone Lara, Seu Monarco and Martinho da Vila. Samba wheels brought new generations of composers and musicians who enriched Brazilian musical manifestations (Napolitano, 2007).

Nowadays, most samba wheels take place in bars, athletic associations, cultural centers or even under tarpaulins installed in backyards, sidewalks and streets of the neighborhoods. Some occur in the samba school courts (Alves, 2015). These entertainment options are usually cheaper, more informal and more accessible to a lower income public that inhabits some of the poorest regions of Rio de Janeiro, although they are not restricted to these regions. The samba wheels generate income and employment and stimulate consumption after the increasing of purchasing power of the population from the 1990s on, with the implementation of programs of social inclusion in Brazil, particularly in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, they allow greater socialization among people and bring together people from different regions of the city and the state of Rio de Janeiro, as well as tourists. The places in which they occur are, in general, very welcoming and characterized by great informality. Drinks are sold at reduced prices, and, in general, typical Brazilian foods such as feijoada are served and attract more regulars to participate in the samba wheels. These wheels boost local economies and generate income for those involved in their production and performance, from musicians to vehicle keepers in their immediate vicinity (Jesus, 2018).

In order to concentrate samba professionals and cultural producers from Rio de Janeiro to work for the development of the samba wheels in their cultural, tourist and economic potentials, the Carioca Network of Samba Wheels – “Rede Carioca de Rodas de Samba”, popularly known as “RS” – aims to discuss the work of professionals who promote, play and sing the samba in the city (Rede Carioca de Rodas de Samba, 2018). One of the main difficulties indicated by its members was to guarantee the cultural and financial sustainability of the samba wheels that integrated RS and the network itself. In 2018, RS started to develop a cooperation with the Professional Master's Program in Creative Economy Management (MPGEC, its acronym in Portuguese) of the Superior School of Advertising and Marketing of Rio de Janeiro (ESPM-Rio, its acronym in Portuguese) – a private higher education institution in the city – in order to develop ways to overcome this obstacle. ESPM-Rio was one of the universities in Brazil that have developed an interdisciplinary professional master's program in creative economy, created in 2016. Creative economy refers to sectors based on talents and individual and collective skills such as advertising, architecture, crafts,

design, fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, radio, TV and museums. The objective of the master's program offered by ESPM-Rio is to educate specialists in the application of managerial, legal and operational knowledge in these sectors, with creative, investigative and reflexive skills in Design, Communication and Management (ESPM, 2016).

The aim of the article is to examine how the tasks and activities developed by MPGEC students contributed to the RS's cultural and financial sustainability. These activities were developed in the discipline "Advanced Management of Cultural Projects for Creative Cities", taught by the authors of this study<sup>1</sup>. The discipline was offered in the second semester of 2018 for a group of ten master's program's students, whose research is located within the research line "Strategic Management of Creative Sectors". These students were in the second period of the master's program. The main argument indicates that, as RS may have a fundamental position in the generation of cultural and economic value with a great capacity to articulate with authorities and a strong legitimacy in the carioca samba system, MPGEC students worked to minimize weaknesses related to institutional communication, the relationship with people who attend the samba wheels and contracting parties, people management and strategic planning, as well as seize opportunities related to cultural tourism and face threats such as the growing bureaucracy and the strong opposition to samba wheels from showhouses. To contribute to the RS's cultural and financial sustainability, MPGEC students focused on a strategy for professional management of artists' careers to generate more income and jobs for the professionals in the samba wheels and the promotion of the samba culture in Rio de Janeiro. The students also proposed a better institutional presentation, with more robust mission, vision and values for the RS's brand, and the implementation of a customer relationship management for the network to stimulate the loyalty of the people who attend the samba wheels with personalized products and the enhanced use of social networks to communicate with them. They also highlighted the need of a new organizational structure for RS to deal with more complex activities related to marketing, artistic management, events production and articulation with public authorities and local commercial establishments where the samba wheels take place.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### ***2.1. The education for creative economy***

Creative economy is usually connected to the idea of activities based on individual and collective talent or ability, such as crafts, fashion, the classic cultural industries – audiovisual, music and book – and the new software and games industries (Miguez 2007). Social development policies and the transformation of sociocultural values are linked to the advance of creative sectors, as well as the transition from materialistic values to the attendance of aesthetic, cultural and intellectual needs of people (Bendassolli et al., 2009; Jesus and Kamlot, 2017, 2018). With the rise of cultural and creative resources on the scale of economic relevance, leaders from all around the world had to turn their attention to the foundation of knowledge in the educational systems in their countries. Contemporary societies now need to educate not a standardized

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<sup>1</sup> At MPGEC, most disciplines are offered by two professors for the same class. In general, both are present in class and have different competencies to strengthen students' skills development.

labor force as in the industrial economy, but a more flexible one for the creative economy, which encompasses knowledge about the development and use of multiple technologies, business practices and critical political and social thought (Florida, 2002, 2005).

Intellectual and creative skills that emphasize interdisciplinarity and independent thinking are required from the earliest stages of the educational process to the university, with the emphasis on the linkages among arts, humanities and sciences. Such skills can be enhanced by active teaching methodologies which promote more independent actions, creative and imaginative engagement and research skills by students to produce innovation (Araya, 2010; Venturelli, 2000). It is also important to say that the education for creative economy is based on the transdisciplinarity between three knowledge pillars: technical / scientific, cultural / creative and business. The first two allow the introduction of new topics of knowledge in the creative sectors, while the business regime allows to turn these topics into products and services valued by the market and society. However, the development of creativity by students also involves the valuation of traditional knowledge and practices – which underpin creative economy as an engine for development – and the formation of critical, questioning and analytical thinking in the light of the broader political-economic and sociocultural dynamics in creative sectors (Jesus & Kamlot, 2018).

In the context of graduate programs for the development of creative economy, professional master's programs have an important role. They seek to meet the demands of companies, governments and civil society organizations for personnel with a level of qualification that goes beyond the knowledge offered in undergraduate courses and are capable to connect theoretical knowledge and practical demands of professional life. In the context of creative economy, these programs can contribute to generate processes and technical or technological products capable of enhancing innovation, competitiveness and sustainability of organizations. For the implementation of such master's programs, educational institutions need not only professors with different profiles from those who are strictly dedicated to academic research, but new materials, technological structures, research and investments to match the courses with the demands of the market. The interdisciplinary professional master's programs accumulate expertise from multiple areas of knowledge and generate experiences and activities for the development of transversal competences, which are directed to the realization of interventions aimed at market, political and social solutions (Castro, 2005; Ribeiro, 2005). The universities transfer knowledge to public institutions, companies and social organizations and create practical learning situations for students, such as the formulation of projects that allow governments and social actors new ways of attracting investments; improvements in the communication strategies of these actors with society; and the development of activities that promote cultural diversity and the social integration of low-income populations (Jesus & Figueiredo, 2018). The works produced by students in a professional master's program may bring recommendations of practical interventions, supported by the theoretical-conceptual discussion (Fischer, 2005).

In the research line of Strategic Management of Creative Sectors, MPGEC – which is an interdisciplinary professional master's program – aims to develop skills, in the students, for the formulation of cultural projects for creative cities. The concept of “creative city” usually refers to cities in which social and artistic activities, creative sectors and government articulate their actions and produce a cultural

effervescence capable of attracting talents, promoting social diversity and strengthening the creative potential of institutions (CCTC, n.d.). According to Landry (2011) and Chantelot et al. (2011), creative cities bring together culture – related to urban identity and heritage –; communication – the physical and technological models of linking inhabitants and the minimization of conflicts; and cooperation, understood as the interaction and full acceptance of diversity.

## ***2.2. Samba wheels and creative economy in Rio de Janeiro***

Some of the first studies about the role of samba in the building of Brazilian identity sought to place the hills of the city of Rio de Janeiro as places where the “authentic samba” was practiced and the samba wheels as spaces of creativity of the collectivity, as well as materializations of the criticism to the use of such musical genre by the music industry, seen as a threat to its “basic identity.” The interest aroused in this musical genre by various social groups, the territorial mobility of cultural experiences in Rio de Janeiro, the formation of samba schools and the development of the radio contributed to the spread of samba throughout Brazil from the 1930s on (Napolitano & Wasserman, 2000). Subsequently, the work of specialists such as Sodré (1998) indicated that samba was a means of affirming black cultural values and resistance to the dominant mode of musical production in Rio de Janeiro in the context of an “African diaspora” throughout the city in the beginning of the twentieth century. Authors such as Vianna (1995) argued that the placement of samba as a tradition or cultural resistance would be an invention that served numerous political and economic interests, including a project to build a national identity during Getúlio Vargas’ “Estado Novo” (“New State”) from a cultural practice that provided meetings among people and emptied conflicts between different social segments in Rio de Janeiro.

Despite the different positions on the role of samba in the definition of Brazilian identity, the samba wheels spread all over the country, especially in Rio de Janeiro. As important parts of the development of creative economy in Rio de Janeiro, samba wheels are more than cheap and informal entertainment options, but they can generate income and jobs, boost local economies, stimulate the consumption of cultural goods and allow greater socialization among people, bringing together people from different regions of the city and the state of Rio de Janeiro, as well as tourists (Jesus, 2018). Most samba wheels preserve the black roots of Brazilian music, bring new generations of artists who enrich Brazilian culture and develop collective and historical memories by the permanent construction of identity which anchors the memory of the society. Personal and collective memories can be constructed and reactivated by samba wheels. They build and recover specific moments and can produce intense emotional and affective relations (Napolitano, 2007; Lopes, 2014).

Important transformations brought the conditions of possibility for more samba wheels to take place in Rio de Janeiro as important parts of the city’s creative economy from the 1990s on. The first was the implementation of urban development programs that highlighted the cultural and commercial characteristics of Rio de Janeiro’s neighborhoods and sought to promote new investments in the suburbs, especially the Rio Cidade program, initiated by Mayor Cesar Maia in his first term (1993-1996) and finalized in the administration of his successor, Luiz Paulo Conde (1997-2000). Businessmen from multiple sectors of creative economy – including the ones related to samba – have developed spaces for the best



accommodation of clients and stimulated the development of more efficient transportation for people to come to entertainment and cultural places (Góis, 2015; Santos, 2011).

The second transformation was the development of social programs by the federal, state and municipal governments that contributed to the increase of income of the poorest population. The growth of the gains of the poorest layers in the Northern and Western areas of the city allowed the reduction of extreme poverty and provided even more resources for the consumption of people from these layers. At the federal level, since the end of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration and the beginning of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government, social programs such as Bolsa Família have contributed to poverty reduction through income transfer, combined with a growth of national economy and the improvement of the employment rate and labor income (Almeida, 2010). At the state level, Rio de Janeiro's extreme poverty elimination plan, Rio Sem Miséria, stimulated completion of secondary education for young people living in extreme poverty and had a management program to promote their inclusion in the job market through partnerships (Governo do Rio de Janeiro, n.d.). The government of the city of Rio de Janeiro has more than 100 social inclusion programs, especially for the most vulnerable population (IPP, n.d.).

### **3. Methodology**

The data collection for this study was based on a participant observation of the performance of the students in the accomplishment of the proposed tasks in the light of RS's needs within the scope of the discipline "Advanced Management of Cultural Projects for Creative Cities". The purpose of the discipline was to stimulate the development and application of tools and methodologies for the elaboration and management of cultural projects for creative cities. The significance of the proposals for RS and the samba wheels is to bring practical interventions to promote cultural diversity and stimulate Rio de Janeiro's samba culture and the social integration of low-income populations.

Initially, the proposed task was the elaboration of a project of financial and cultural sustainability for the RS and the samba wheels which integrate the network. The aim at this stage of the research conducted by the authors was to compile the most relevant actions taken by the students in the planning and the formulation of the project, namely: the collection of official documents with data about the samba culture in Rio de Janeiro and the role of samba wheels for the city, more specifically to the communities in which they take place; interviews with RS's members and samba wheels' artists; visits to the RS's debates and samba wheels; the writing of the project by the students, under the guidance of the professors; and the presentation of the project to the RS's members.

In the analysis of the collected data, we sought qualitatively to interpret the students' actions in the stages of the elaboration of the project to investigate the interaction of the RS with the students and the professors responsible for the discipline at ESPM-Rio. In addition, we sought to compare the content of the final report presented by the students to RS, prepared under our guidance, with the theoretical-conceptual basis about the education for creative economy and the role of the samba wheels in Rio de Janeiro's creative economy.

## **4. Results**

The initial contact with the RS was established by the authors in June 2018, before the beginning of the university term. On the occasion, we explained to RS's members the MPGEC's objectives, the aims of the discipline we would teach and the task to be proposed to students. With the positive signals from the members of the network regarding the partnership with ESPM-Rio, we asked them to propose a task that would allow the realization of an intervention project that would contribute to the network and its samba wheels. The task would be to create a business model that would guarantee the financial sustainability of the RS and the samba wheels, as well as preserve the black roots of the samba wheels as an important part of Rio de Janeiro's identity.

Based on the task proposed by RS for a financial and cultural sustainability project, the authors structured their classes in two moments. In the first one, the exposition and the discussion of conceptual and theoretical content were aimed at the elaboration of projects for creative cities in all stages, namely: 1) initiation: definition of guidelines of the project; 2) planning: refinement of objectives, planning of actions and detailing of the scope of the project; 3) implementation: integration of resources and team to carry out the plan; 4) monitoring: regular assessment of development; 5) closure: formalization of acceptance of the product and its termination (Campanario et al., 2009). In carrying out the activity proposed by RS, the focus would be on the first three stages. In the second moment of the class, the students dedicated specifically to the task assigned by RS, under the guidance of the two professors. The final grade awarded to the students was composed as follows: 50% corresponded to the printed report handed to RS, and the other 50% represented the individual performance of the student in the presentation of the project to RS. The task proposed by the RS was presented to the students in the first two classes.

In the formulation of the project, specific tasks were assigned to the ten participating students in a meeting with the professors. Each group of three or four students was responsible for at least two different tasks, such as interviews with RS's members, local visits to the network's debates and samba wheels, elaboration and presentation of the final document. Some interviews with RS's leaders were held in the second part of the classes at ESPM-Rio's facilities. In this part of the class, students were also able to use the classroom for partial meetings about the content of the project and the computer labs for the preparation of the report and the preparation of the presentation to RS. Some questions needed to prepare the document were emailed to RS's members, who sent the necessary data to the formulation of the students' diagnosis of the situation. Students also held some interviews outside class with RS's members to collect data. Outside the class period, some students and the professors visited the RS's debates and some samba wheels to gather information with samba wheels' artists and the people who participate in these cultural events. Students also collected data on the communities where the samba wheels take place.

From the debates in the first classes about the theoretical and conceptual content of the discipline between the professors and the students in the initiation of the project, a structure of the document to be presented to the RS was established. In the introduction, the objectives of the project, its didactic importance, its relevance in terms of social intervention and a brief presentation of the other sections would be included. The second section would deal with the relevance of samba in the construction of Rio de Janeiro's identity and the main political, economic and legal aspects related to samba in Brazil. The section

would start with a brief historical description of the creation of samba in the end of the nineteenth century by the African people and their descendants and the justification of its relevance in the city's identity. It would also highlight the importance of the three bases of the carioca samba – samba de terreiro, samba enredo and partido alto – as parts of Brazilian cultural heritage, which indicates the necessity of public policies to protect, diffuse and stimulate the production of music based on the African sounds as elements of Brazilian identity. The theoretical discussion of Furtado's (1984) idea that culture and development are connected would be presented at this section to show that economic development is an endogenous social process that lead to human creativity, which is conditioned by cultural structures. In this sense, understanding the role of samba wheels in the city of Rio de Janeiro would highlight intellectual capacities which show connections of historical and geographical nature and act as suppliers of elements for the construction of identity. These elements could also help reduce the fragmentation of the city by the approximation of the territory desired by society with the real territory. The second section would also show that samba wheels can generate income for the people involved in their production. It would bring federal, state and city laws related to samba to contextualize the legal aspects related to the genre in Brazil.

The third section would bring a diagnosis of the RS's situation, as well as of its samba wheels. It would encompass the main problems RS has from a SWOT Analysis – a tool used to make scenario analyses, which considers strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – and the identification of critical success factors. Among the strengths, the students indicated the RS's good relations with the city government and its commitment to the causes related to the preservation of samba as a symbol of Rio de Janeiro's identity. Some of the strongest weaknesses were the lack of publicization of the samba wheels, the poor RS's institutional communication, the lack of management of the relations of the network and the samba wheels with people who attend these events and contracting parties and the weak institutional organization. The valuation of cultural tourism, the growing interest of audiences in live acts, the interest of contracting parties to have samba wheels in their events and the existence of culture promotion policies and incentive laws were seen as opportunities, while the strengthening of military police's repression to events in public spaces, the growing bureaucracy for events in open places of the city and the opposition of showhouses to samba wheels were seen as threats.

The fourth section of the project would bring recommendations for an action plan, including possible strategies generated from the cross-SWOT analysis. This action plan would be based on the results of such an analysis and the proposition of an alternative business model for RS and the samba wheels which integrated the network. In the elaboration of the report, the students focused on four recommendations which could generate economic and cultural value between the network, the samba wheels and society and strengthen the cultural and financial sustainability of the samba wheels and RS: 1) a strategy for professional management of artists' careers to generate more income and jobs for the professionals in the samba wheels and the promotion of the samba culture in Rio de Janeiro; 2) the implementation of a customer relationship management for the network to stimulate the loyalty of the people who attend the samba wheels, with personalized products and the enhanced use of social networks to communicate with them; 3) a better institutional presentation, with more robust mission, vision and values for the RS's brand; and 4) the need for a new organizational structure for RS.



The first recommendation – a strategy for the professional management of samba wheels’ artists’ careers – specified revenue resources – such as the sale of phonograms, author’s intellectual rights and live performances – and included a model of artistic producing company, the legal aspects regarding taxation and the types of contracts that may be signed by artists, the types of clients (fans and contracting parties) and the services that could be offered by the network, such as executive production, financial management, the selling of shows and licensed products connected to the samba wheels and advertising and author’s rights management regarding the samba wheels which integrate the RS.

The second brings details on the experiences the people who attend the samba wheels may have and the opportunities to communicate with them. Before the samba wheels start or when they are taking place, the use of social networks to publicize the samba wheels, the presentation of exclusive sales and gifts and the creation of a customer attendance service could be important to stimulate the loyalty of the people who attend the wheels. Regarding the relationship with these people after the samba wheels take place, the network could be responsible for mailing and using the internet – specially Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – to connect with the people who went to the samba wheels and inform them about future events and gifts they might have if they keep going to the wheels. This is also a way to diffuse the samba culture and bring new people for the samba wheels because of the cultural, emotional and affective experiences these events may cause.

In the third recommendation, the students proposed a better institutional presentation for RS, with clearer and stronger mission, vision and values which needed to be coherent to strengthen its image to the audience and consequently stimulate greater fidelity and recognition of the samba wheels themselves, the supporters and the final consumers. This would allow samba wheels to face less vulnerability in times of crisis, for example. The new RS’s mission indicated by the students was to integrate and strengthen Rio de Janeiro’s samba wheels, based on the development of their cultural, social, tourist and economic potentials, providing the professional organization and the artistic entrepreneurship for the wheels, making them sustainable and guaranteeing the preservation of the samba culture in Rio de Janeiro. The new vision was to be a strong, sustainable network and reference in the artistic representation of the Rio de Janeiro samba wheels, giving them qualified professional support in order to guarantee the diffusion, preservation and constant evolution of the samba wheels in the city. The proposed values include the valuation of the samba wheels; the historical and identity preservation of the samba wheels; democratic and participatory management; ethics and transparency; social and environmental responsibility; and social inclusion, which are compatible with the principles of creative economy.

Because of the more diversified tasks that the RS would have to deal with, the fourth recommendation brings specific coordination organs to deal with more complex activities related to marketing, artistic management, events production and articulation with public authorities and local commercial establishments where the samba wheels take place. This is compatible with the strategy of the professional management of the samba wheels presented above.

In the presentation of the project to the RS’s members, in addition to the analysis produced by the students, the students carried out another SWOT analysis exercise with the present members, since the main solutions must be based on the knowledge of those who lead the network. The RS’s members were

very satisfied with the result and said they would work on the strategies and recommendations given by MPGEC students. At the end of the discipline, the authors of the article asked students to develop their own evaluation of the subject and the project they developed. They were asked to indicate what the main features of the discipline were and how it contributed to their development as creative economy's managers. Almost 90% of the answers were very positive, and all of them indicated that the main feature was the elimination of the gap between the academic knowledge and the professional practice. However, one student highlighted that the social implications of the cultural project should have been more developed in the light of the idea that creative economy should promote social inclusion and benefits for the whole community. In her opinion, the business aspect of the project was more evident than its social benefits.

## **5. Analysis and Discussion**

It was possible to identify that the students realized that RS had two main audiences: the samba wheels and the people who attend them. The first audience needed to see enough cultural and economic value to justify a monthly contribution to the maintenance of the network, which until now has been based strictly on the legitimacy of its members in the scenario of the samba wheels in Rio de Janeiro. The second audience seeks experiences that bring the symbolism of samba, along with a form of quality entertainment. However, most go to samba wheels sporadically. In this sense, it was necessary to strengthen their loyalty to the network and the samba wheels, for which a better RS's institutional presentation and a customer relationship management could contribute. The clearer mission, vision and values proposed by MPGEC students may also be important to turn the network into an important actor who guide public policies for samba in Rio de Janeiro and make the samba wheels not only a cultural product to be sold, but also a mechanism to preserve the memory of the city and build emotional and affective relations among people, as Napolitano (2007) and Lopes (2014) indicate.

Regarding the development of projects for creative cities, the proposed task allowed that creativity transcend the creative sectors themselves and embrace social innovations in the public sphere, particularly in the stimulus for new forms of organization of activities that can generate income and jobs and preserve heritage. In line with Landry (2011) and Chantelot et al. (2011), the implementation of innovative projects like the one proposed by MPGEC students bring together culture – related to urban identity and heritage –; communication – the physical and technological models of linking people –; and more interaction and acceptance of diversity. This initiative also shows how education for creative economy can connect the technical / scientific, cultural and business pillars of creative economy, as put by Araya (2010), Venturelli (2000) and Jesus & Kamlot (2018). Based on the scientific discussion about the interconnectedness of culture and development, MPGEC students developed the analytical thinking of the ways in which cultural activities such as samba wheels can generate income and preserve traditions. At the same time, they identified the relevance of respecting the cultural local specificities in order to engage people in the RS's new organizational structure and bring new regulars for the samba wheels using communication tools to publicize the work of its artists. The business model – presented in the strategy for the professional management of samba wheels' artists' careers – allows to turn samba wheels into cultural products valued by the market and society, but it is important to say that they are not limited to that role. They also preserve

the memory of the city and the roots of black culture in one of Brazil's most important creative cities.

For the teaching practices in professional master's programs, it is possible to identify that, in most students' evaluations, the gap between the theoretical and conceptual contents of the discipline and their applicability was eliminated, which is compatible with the proposal of a professional master's degree. However, the indication, from one student, that the social aspects were secondary in the light of the business aspects of the cultural project called our attention for future experiences in teaching the same discipline. It was an important indication that broader solutions for social inclusion and the benefits for the whole community should be more emphasized and developed in future projects, which is compatible with the type of social intervention that creative economy managers should implement.

## **6. Conclusion**

The RS may have a fundamental position in the generation of cultural and economic value, but the lack of articulation with authorities and local business establishments and its inability to use its strong legitimacy in the carioca samba system created problems for its cultural and financial sustainability. In the light of this, MPGEC students worked to minimize weaknesses related to institutional communication, the relationship with people who attend the samba wheels and contracting parties, people management and strategic planning, as well as seize opportunities related to cultural tourism and face threats such as the growing bureaucracy and the strong opposition to samba wheels from showhouses. They focused on a strategy for professional management of artists' careers, a better RS's institutional presentation, the implementation of a customer relationship management and a new organizational structure for the network. The intervention project elaborated by MPGEC students under our guidance aimed to create a business model that would guarantee the financial sustainability of the RS and the samba wheels, as well as preserve the black roots of the samba wheels as an important part of Rio de Janeiro's identity.

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